

# Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Communities in Washington State



*Mission: Addressing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) tobacco-related health disparities by building community capacity and enhancing competence of existing tobacco prevention*

## Overview

- The tobacco-use prevalence rates for lesbian, gay, and bisexual 35- to 54-year-olds in Washington State is 31.1 percent; for 18- to 34-year-olds, the rate is 39.7 percent.<sup>1</sup>
- The smoking rate for lesbians in Washington is 25.3 percent, 70 percent higher than that of heterosexual women (14.9 percent).
- The smoking rate for gay men is 33.2 percent compared to 21.3 percent for heterosexual men.<sup>2</sup>
- Research on adult tobacco use consistently shows a higher prevalence among lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) populations than the general population. The tobacco industry's formerly secret documents showed specific marketing to LGBT communities through direct and indirect marketing, community outreach, and event and business sponsorships.<sup>3</sup>

## Key Accomplishments

- Building community capacity through:
  - **Entre Hermanos (Seattle/statewide)** – Entre Hermanos coordinated a large-scale, smoke-free Latino event called the Latino Pageant, ran radio ads in Spanish, print ads in Latino newspapers, and had programming on their monthly radio show that addresses the overuse of tobacco among LGBT Latinos.
  - **Oasis Youth Center/Pierce County AIDS Foundation (Tacoma/Pierce County)** – The youth-led "Pierce County Queers Kick Ash" project uses a harm reduction model recognizing stages of change in individuals, fosters an environment of empowerment to help youth members make tobacco use less acceptable, and help youth identify the racial and economic injustices that occur as a result of targeting efforts from the tobacco industry.
  - **Gay City Health Project (in collaboration with the LGBT Community Center, Seattle)** – Gay City's "My Greatest Enemy" media campaign raised awareness about how lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people experience higher rates of tobacco use than the general public. The project used techniques traditionally used by tobacco companies to target LGBT community, and produced materials for youth, people of color, and transgendered individuals.
  - **Stonewall Youth (Olympia/Thurston County)** – Stonewall Youth planned and carried out the "Queer Youth Kick Butt" project. Through this project, Stonewall Youth recruited and trained young people to speak to high schools, youth care facilities, and community colleges on tobacco prevention topics, and designed materials in English and Spanish to use during speaking engagements.
  - **Rainbow Center (Tacoma/Pierce County)** – The Rainbow Center educated medical providers on the unique tobacco health disparities faced by transgendered individuals; printed and distributed health education materials to medical offices, support groups, and community venues frequented by the transgender community; and sponsors a free tobacco cessation program for transgender individuals.
- Enhancing competency through:
  - Adaptation of LGBT-specific tobacco prevention and cessation materials and inclusion in the Washington Tobacco Clearinghouse
  - Collaboration with GMMB on the 18- to 29-year-old Tobacco Quit Line campaign; 15,000 postcards distributed to LGBT venues and to Washington Tobacco Prevention and Control Program contractors.
  - LGBT Tobacco Prevention & Control CD-ROM: *Resources for Washington State Tobacco Prevention and Control Contractors* distributed to all Washington Tobacco Prevention and Control contractors

<sup>1</sup> Washington State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, 2003

<sup>2</sup> Tang H, Greenwood GL, Cowling DW, Lloyd JC, Roeseler AG, Bal DG. *Cigarette Smoking Among Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals: How Serious a Problem?* California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section, Sacramento, CA.

<sup>3</sup> Stevens P, Carlson LM, Hinman JM. Health Promotion Practices. Jul 2004; 5 (3 Suppl): 129S-134S. *Strategic Initiatives for the Tobacco Technical Assistance Consortium*. Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia